

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

1. (Original) A process for modifying a pectin comprising:
 - (i) providing a host having PME activity and PG activity;
 - (ii) transforming said host by silencing PG activity thereby to provide an increased PME to PG ratio;
 - (iii) preparing a PME extract from the transformed host;
 - (iv) using the PME extract to modify pectin.
2. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the activity of the native PG enzyme is silenced by expression of all or part of a nucleotide sequence in an antisense orientation.
3. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the activity of the native PG enzyme comprising the amino acid sequence presented as SEQ ID No: 2 or a variant, homologue or fragment thereof is silenced by expression of all or part of a nucleotide sequence in an antisense orientation.
4. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the activity of the native PG enzyme comprising the amino acid sequence presented as SEQ ID No: 2 is silenced by expression of all or part of a nucleotide sequence in an antisense orientation.

5. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the activity of the native PG enzyme is silenced by expression of all or part of a nucleotide sequence comprising the sequence presented as SEQ ID No: 1 or SEQ ID No: 4 or a variant, homologue, fragment, or derivative thereof in an antisense orientation.

6. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the activity of the native PG enzyme is silenced by expression of all or part of a nucleotide sequence comprising the sequence presented as SEQ ID No: 1 or SEQ ID No: 4 in an antisense orientation sequence.

7. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the activity of the native PG enzyme is silenced *in planta*.

8. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the process includes the further step of isolating the PME modified pectin from the active PME.

9. (Original) A process according to claim 8 wherein the PME modified pectin is a high ester pectin.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 8 wherein the PME modified pectin contains from about 55% to about 85% ester groups.

11. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 8 wherein the PME modified pectin contains from about 70% to about 80% ester groups.

12. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 8 wherein the PME modified pectin contains from about 72% to about 80% ester groups.

13. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 9 wherein the PME modified pectin contains from about 76% to about 80% ester groups.

14. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the process includes the further step of adding the PME modified pectin to a medium that is suitable for consumption.

15. (Original) A process according to claim 14 wherein the medium is an acidic environment.

16. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 15, wherein the acidic environment has a pH of from about 3.5 to about 5.5.

17. (Original) A process according to claim 16, wherein the acidic environment has a pH of about 4.

18. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 15 wherein the medium is an aqueous solution.

19. (Original) A process according to claim 18 wherein the aqueous solution is a beverage.

20. (Original) A process according to claim 19 wherein the beverage is an acidified milk beverage, a drinking yoghurt, a fruit juice, milk beverage or a beverage comprising whey protein or a vegetable protein such as soya.

21. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 18 wherein the medium comprises a protein.

22. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 21 wherein the protein is derived from or is derivable from or is in a dairy product.

23. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 22 wherein the protein is casein or whey protein or a vegetable protein.

24. (Previously Presented) A PME modified pectin produced by the process according to claim 1.

25. (Previously Presented) A food stuff comprising a PME modified pectin prepared by the process according to claim 1.

26. (Previously Presented) A PME modified pectin according to claim 24 wherein the pectin has a molecular weight from about 50kDa to about 200kDa.

27. (Original) A PME modified pectin according to claim 26 wherein the pectin has a molecular weight of about 100kDa.

28. (Previously Presented) A transformed host as defined in claim 1 comprising a construct comprising promoter and termination sequences operable in plant cells and there between a nucleotide sequence comprising all or part of SEQ ID No 1 or SEQ ID No 4 or a variant, homologue or fragment thereof in an antisense orientation.

29. (Original) A transformed host according to claim 28 wherein the host is a plant.

30. (Previously Presented) A transformed host according to claim 28 wherein the host is a tomato plant.

Claims 31-33 (Canceled).

34. (New) A method comprising contacting a pectin with a PME, wherein said PME reduces the number of ester groups in the pectin and in a block-wise manner.

35. (New) A method comprising contacting a pectin with a PME, wherein said PME de-esterifies two or more adjacent galacturonic acid residues of the pectin on substantially all of the pectin chains.

36. (New) A method of preparing a food product comprising adding to a yoghurt, milk/fruit juice or whey drink a pectin that has been modified by a PME wherein said food product has an improved viscosity and a longer shelf-life, wherein said pectin has been modified by a PME by contacting the pectin with a PME.